

Sunday, June 17, 2018
4th Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE

"Antiphon"

J.S. Bach

*GATHERING SONG

"Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"

ELW 533

Open now thy gates of beauty,
Zion, let me enter there,
where my soul in joyful duty
waits for God who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place,
filled with solace, light, and grace!

Gracious God, I come before thee;
come thou also unto me;
where we find thee and adore thee,
there a heav'n on earth must be.
To my heart, oh, enter thou,
let it be thy temple now!

Here thy praise is gladly chanted,
here thy seed is duly sown;
let my soul, where it is planted,
bring forth precious sheaves alone,
so that all I hear may be
fruitful unto life in me.

Thou my faith increase and quicken,
let me keep thy gift divine;
howsoe'er temptations thicken,
may thy word still o'er me shine
as my guiding star through life,
as my comfort in all strife.

Speak, O God, and I will hear thee,
let thy will be done indeed;
may I undisturbed draw near thee
while thou dost thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows;
here is balm for all our woes.

*GREETING

P *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

☒ And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

☐ *O God,*

☒ **you are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we may bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Stephanie Gummelt

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Tree imagery is used in a messianic prophecy to tell how the Lord will choose someone from Judah's royal family (the cedar tree) to reign over all creation. This tree will be planted on Mount Zion, the location of the holy temple.

²²Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig
from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one
from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it
on a high and lofty mountain.

²³On the mountain height of Israel
I will plant it,

in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;
in the shade of its branches will nest
winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴All the trees of the field shall know
that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,
I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree
and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

Reflection

This text is a commentary on the political happenings in Judah. Although Zedekiah, the king of Judah, is doing his best to try to deal with all the political turmoil that exists, including breaking his oath to the king of Babylon, nothing works. Ezekiel, the prophet of the Lord, interprets this turmoil as God's judgment on Zedekiah and Judah. Zedekiah and those around him will perish. (Ezekiel 17:11-21) But that is not the last word of God. What does Ezekiel say God's plan and

promise is? (verse 22) Note that this is a parable, not a description of the planting of a mountain forest. What will happen to the sprig the Lord God will plant? (verse 23) Will this happen quickly? What does verse 24 say about the timing of this? How might this parable give hope to those who feel overwhelmed by terrible things?

PSALM 92:1-4, 12-15

¹It is a good thing to give thanks | to the LORD,
to sing praise to your name, | O Most High;
²**to herald your love | in the morning
and your faithful- | ness at night;**
³on the psaltery, and | on the lyre,
and to the melody | of the harp.
⁴**For you have made me glad by your | acts, O LORD;
and I shout for joy because of the works | of your hands.**
¹²The righteous shall flourish | like a palm tree,
and shall spread abroad like a ce- | dar of Lebanon.
¹³**Those who are planted in the house | of the LORD
shall flourish in the courts | of our God;**
¹⁴they shall still bear fruit | in old age;
they shall be | green and succulent;
¹⁵**that they may show how up- | right the LORD is,
my rock, in whom there is | no injustice.**

Reflection

What is the psalmist thankful for? (verses 1-4) How does the psalmist express thanks? In this psalm, once again, we have the image of trees. (see verses 12-14) What do the trees remind the psalmist of? What is God's relationship to the psalmist? (verse 15) When we were on our vacation, we were in the Redwood National Park. There the trees are very old, very tall, and we learned that they are all interconnected through their roots. Those trees reminded me of God's promises to us. Do you have a special tree, forest, mountain, body of water—something that helps you remember God's loving and never ending faithfulness?

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:6-17

Paul encourages believers to live by faith and not by sight. We do not consider Jesus from a human perspective but through the eyes of faith, believing he died for all and was raised. All who are in Christ are now in God's new creation.

⁶So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you

may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Reflection

I find that if I try to understand 2 Corinthians using both heart knowledge and head knowledge, I get it better than if I try to puzzle out what Paul is trying to say. (Do you experience that as well?) What do you think Paul is trying to convey by his in-body and out-of-body language in verses 6-10? Is he saying it's better to be out of the body? Can you really do or be anyone (at least in this life) without a body? We are responsible for what we do with our bodies! Which may be something to be glad about but also perhaps fearful about! In verse 11, Paul tries to persuade others of Christ (?). Perhaps he has not been as persuasive as he would like. What is he appealing to the church in Corinth to do for him? (verse 12) It appears that some people think he is "beside himself, not in his right mind." (verse 13) What is his answer to them? On what does he base his love and faith? (verses 14-15) He sees those whom he loves (or those whom he is trying to love!) through Christ's love for them. How does that affect how he sees them? (verse 16) How does that change his relationship with them? (verse 17) I confess that I often have trouble remembering this verse, especially when I am frustrated and angry with those who make me frustrated and angry. How might this text help me in my anger and frustration—and you as well, if you experience that?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

"Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil"

ELW 512

**Lord, let my heart be good soil,
open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil,
where love can grow and peace is understood.**

***GOSPEL**

Mark 4:26-34

Jesus frequently uses parables to teach ordinary people as they are able to hear and understand. Images of sowing and growing show the vitality of God's kingdom.

²⁶[Jesus] said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground,²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Reflection

This text is two short parables that Jesus uses to teach about the kingdom of God to those who were close to him and his twelve disciples. What does the first parable (in verses 26-29) tell us about the kingdom of God. What are we required to do to bring in the kingdom? Who would have thought that the answer is "Wait! Sleep and rise!" How will we know when the grain is ripe? What do we do then? Whose work is it to bring about the kingdom of God? The next parable is about a tree, sort of like Ezekiel's tree in our first reading—but not exactly. Surely Jesus knew this passage from Ezekiel about the great tree that becomes a symbol of Judah and the people of God. He doesn't use a cedar or a redwood or a sequoia in this parable. What is his symbol for the kingdom of God? I'm not sure if I know what a mustard shrub looks like, but I do know what a mustard seed is like—so small that you can't bite into it to taste it! What does this parable tell us about the kingdom of God? Whose responsibility is it to make sure the mustard seed grows? What is our part then in the kingdom of God? What do you think it means that Jesus tells parables like this? Learning how to notice mustard seeds and wait for the grain to grow is not something you can learn overnight. May these parables plant themselves in our hearts as we continue to live together in the kingdom of God!

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Eugene Lickenbrock

SERMON

*"Serving a Narrow Minded God "
"Bearing Fruit"*

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY

"10,000 Reasons"

Refrain

**Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name**

**The sun comes up it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes *Refrain***

**You're rich in love and You're slow to anger
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find *Refrain***

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore *Refrain*

Ending

Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name
Worship Your holy name
Lord I'll worship Your holy name

***APOSTLES' CREED**

☒ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!

***PRAYER SONG**

"Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying"

ELW 752

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with the Holy Spirit, we join with the church in every place, praying for the world that God so loves.

A brief silence.

O Most High, your divine realm is like a noble tree whose boughs and branches give shade and rest to the peoples of the earth. Make your church a nesting place for all who need your peace and healing. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, all the world is a garden for your creativity. Refresh places of drought with abundant rains. Strengthen and keep safe those who fight fires in your forests. Help us tend your mountains and plains, oceans and rivers with loving care. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, you speak and your word is accomplished. Speak to the leaders of the nations so they might end cycles of violence, giving people everywhere tranquility and peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Bring the abundant healing blessings of the new creation into the lives of those who suffer illness or deprivation of any kind *especially Klaire and Kay*, and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (pause for 10 seconds). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, your steadfast love and faithfulness sustain your people. Bless fathers and all father figures with such love and faithfulness that children flourish and grow in uprightness and joy. Bless those who long to be fathers and those for whom this day is difficult. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O Most High, just as the earth produces of itself and the harvest comes, you gather up your people from all times and places. Bring us along with those who have died (*especially*) into the lasting harvest of your kingdom. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

By the sure guidance of your Holy Spirit, O God, we lift up our prayers in trust and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

Stephanie Gummelt

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

“Give Thanks”

**Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ, his Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ, his Son.
Give thanks!**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

C **you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

C **And also with you.**

P *Lift up your hearts.*

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna,**

hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna,
hosanna in the highest.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.*

G **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen!**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread.*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace.*

G **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *Jesus Christ, host of this meal,*

C **you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *May God, whose power working in us
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine,
grant you the gifts of faith and hope.*

*Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.*

C **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG**

“Awesome God / How Majestic Is Your Name”

**Our God is an awesome God
He reigns from heaven above
With wisdom pow'r and love
Our God is an awesome God *Repeat***

Ending

**Our God is an awesome God
Our God is an awesome God**

**Oh Lord our Lord how majestic is
Your name in all the earth
Oh Lord our Lord how majestic is
Your name in all the earth
Oh Lord we praise Your name
Oh Lord we magnify Your name
Prince of Peace Mighty God
Oh Lord God Almighty *Repeat***